

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 NIC-01 IO-10 SAJ-01 EB-07 /080 W
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R 101717Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7190

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, GW, GE, WB

SUBJECT: FRG INTERNAL FLAP OVER PUBLIC COMMENTS ON
FRG-GDR RELATIONS

REF: A) BONN 18976, 1974; B) BONN 058

SUMMARY: INNER GERMAN AFFAIRS MINISTER FRANKE HAS
PUBLICLY EMPHASIZED POSSIBILITIES FOR SUCCESS IN UPCOMING
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN BONN AND EAST BERLIN ON THE PACKAGE
OF ITEMS CONTAINED IN THE GDR COMMUNICATION OF DECEMBER 9
(REFTEL A). FRANKE'S COMMENTS WERE DESIGNED TO COUNTER
RECENT RELATIVELY NEGATIVE COMMENTS MADE BY BONN'S CHIEF
OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATION IN EAST BERLIN, GAUS, AND ARE
PART OF FRG'S EFFORTS WHICH BEGAN IN DECEMBER AND CON-
TINUED WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE
(REFTEL B) TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE IN FRG-GDR RELA-
TIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN REMARKS MADE PUBLIC JAN 9, FRG INNER GERMAN

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AFFAIRS MINISTER EGON FRANKE EXPRESSED GENERAL OPTIMISM

AND CONFIDENCE THAT THE UPCOMING FRG-GDR TALKS WILL LEAD TO AGREEMENTS. FRANKE NOTED THE WAY AHEAD WOULD BE DIFFICULT, AND ONE MUST CONCENTRATE ON THE POSSIBLE, BUT INDICATED HE WAS CONFIDENT OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR SUCCESS AND OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN FRG-GDR RELATIONS DURING 1975. IMPROVEMENT IN TRANSIT TRAFFIC AND OPENING OF THE TELTOW CANAL WERE MATTERS OF PARTICULAR PRIORITY, FRANKE SAID, WHILE CONSTRUCTION OF A HAMBURG-BERLIN AUTO-BAHN WAS A MORE LONG-TERM PROJECT. HE SAID HE HAD ALWAYS STRIVED WITHOUT ILLUSION TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS IN FRG-GDR RELATIONS

2. FRANKE'S INTERVIEW MUST BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT REMARKS BY BONN'S MAN IN EAST BERLIN, GUENTER GAUS. IN A NEW YEAR'S RADIO INTERVIEW, GAUS PROVOKED A SMALL FLAP AND ELICITED AN UNUSUALLY STRONG REACTION FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE. GAUS WAS ASKED WHETHER THE FRG HAD ILLUSIONS AS TO THE SPEED AND EXTENT OF PROGRESS IN THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE GDR. APPARENTLY INCLUDING HIMSELF IN HIS JUDGMENT, HE RESPONDED THAT "THE SYMPATHIZERS OF THE POLICY OF DETENTE" HAD HAD ILLUSIONS AND THAT ALL THE PARTICIPANTS HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT "SHORTWINDED" IN THEIR CALCULATIONS, MEANING THAT THE ENVISAGED TIME FRAME FOR NORMALIZATION WAS TOO SHORT. GAUS SAID THAT EVERYTHING LEADING TOWARD A MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN THE TWO STATES NEEDED MANY SMALL STEPS AND COULD TAKE TEN, FIFTEEN, OR TWENTY YEARS TO BE REALIZED.

3. IT APPARENTLY WAS THIS LAST REMARK, TOGETHER WITH THE STATEMENT ON ILLUSIONS, WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT A STRONG REBUTTAL AND TRORIMAND FROM THE CHANCELLERY. FRG

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GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN GRUENEWALD SAID AT THE DAILY PRESS BRIEFING ON JANUARY 3 THAT GAUS' REMARKS HAD NOT, ACCORDING TO HIS UNDERSTANDING, BEEN CLEARED WITH SCHMIDT. HE SAID THAT ON THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS OF ALL-GERMAN POLICY, IT WAS THE WISH OF THE CHANCELLOR THAT ONLY THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN MAKE PRONOUNCEMENTS. GRUENEWALD NOTED THAT ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, AS EARLY AS MAY 1970, THEN CHANCELLOR BRANDT HAD SPOKEN OF THE LONG AND DIFFICULT WAY OF INNER-GERMAN NORMALIZATION AND WARNED AGAINST ILLUSIONS.

4. COMMENT. SCHMIDT'S ANNOYANCE WITH GAUS MOST LIKELY HAS ARISEN NOT ONLY FROM THE FACT THAT GAUS DID NOT CLEAR HIS REMARKS, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY APPEAR TO SOMEWHAT CONTRADICT HIS OWN OPTIMISTIC PREDICTION IN HIS NEW YEAR'S STATEMENT (REFTEL B) ON BERLIN AND RELATIONS WITH THE GDR. GAUS' STATEMENT WAS SEEN NOT ONLY AS DETRACTING FROM THE POLITICAL CAPITAL THE SPD HOPES TO

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GAIN FROM THE RECENT MOVEMENT IN INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS PRIOR TO UPCOMING LAENDER ELECTIONS BUT, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES, ALSO IRRITATED THE OLD OSTPOLITIK HANDS IN THE SPD AND IN THE GOVERNMENT. TO GAUS' DETRIMENT, HIS INTERVIEW RECEIVED GREATER ATTENTION THAN COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED BECAUSE OF THE DEARTH OF NEWS OVER THE HOLIDAYS. FRANKE'S SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW WAS SPECIFICALLY ARRANGED AS A FOLLOW-UP TO GRUENEWALD'S REMARKS NOT ONLY TO REESTABLISH THE GOVERNMENT LINE ON FRG-GDR RELATIONS, BUT TO SOOTHE THE RUFFLED FEATHERS OF THE OSTPOLITIK HANDS.

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